

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN HOMILETIC MAGAZINE.

VOL. II.

FEBRUARY, 1904.

No. 2.

Sermonic Discourse on Acts 20, 27.

DEAR FRIENDS:—

To-day, as you are aware, we have dedicated this church to the name of the Triune God. Two services in the German language were conducted for the special benefit of the local congregation and her many brethren of the faith. It is very proper that by an English service and sermon our many friends not conversant with the German and not familiar with our church should be made acquainted, as much as brief time will permit, with her doctrines and usages. We owe this to you; and you owe it to us and yourselves to learn the teachings and doings of any organization, secular or religious, in your community.—So I shall address my remarks principally to our friends of English tongue, following the illustrious example of the Apostle in declaring unto you *all the counsel of God*, as limited time will permit.

Let us consider:—

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE.

I.

We first consider the principles, or doctrines, of our church, before we turn to her practice, or life; for doctrine is more important than life. I did not say that you may live as you please, provided you profess the true doctrine. The Apostle in our text, and in his writings throughout, emphasizes doctrine as being the basis of a God-pleasing life.

In our day, you know, the opposite is believed to be true. Men will tell you, "You may *believe* whatsoever you choose, provided you lead an honest life and always do the best you can." Never was a greater mistake made. This puts a premium on hypocrisy, and does away with the Bible.—Or take this statement, "Do what you think is right, and you are all right." So if the anarchist thinks he is right in blowing up your house, he is all right—is he?

Nay, we must *know* and *believe* the right thing in the first place; thereupon we may be in a position to *live* accordingly. Hence *doctrine* is the first and foremost thing in religion, as it is in politics and everything else.

Now whence does the Lutheran church get her doctrine, that "counsel of God" of which the Apostle speaks? "From the Bible," you say, "the same as all other churches." From the Bible, indeed; but not the same as all other churches, for we believe in *full and verbal inspiration*. It is the counsel of *God*, not of men, that St. Paul was declaring, or preaching. And "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." There is no exception to this rule. From the first page to the last, all that is contained in Holy Writ is given by inspiration of God. We do not believe in this *higher criticism* of to-day that would have you doubt the authorship of this or that book of Scripture, that would have you discard this or the other chapter, and finally not be sure of *anything* in this sacred Book. Again, we have no patience with those placing *reason* above inspiration. There are mysteries in the Bible, and these are not to be rejected because not congenial to human reason. You are not told to *understand* God and the Bible in all its deep statements; you are asked to accept *all* biblical statements, because "*all* Scripture is given by inspiration of God." There are many people that say, We believe the Bible to be inspired; but they do not mean that every verse, every statement, every *word* in the Bible is inspired; that hence there cannot be an error of *any* nature in Scripture. But does not the Apostle say, "Which things also we speak, not in the *words* which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2, 13)?

Now we have a *sure basis* on which to build; we have an infallible Supreme Court to which we may appeal. And we need a thing of this kind; in fact, every man has an authority of some kind. If you do not accept the Bible as the highest authority, perhaps you accept the Pope at Rome; or you take your own opinion, your reason, for the best guide; or you are swayed by the majority. However, nothing but the Bible presents a safe mooring. "Thy Word is truth," and from this "Word" we must draw the truth, for we are to "search the Scriptures."

This truth, this whole counsel of God, is divided into *Law* and *Gospel*.

The *Law* comprises not only the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, but embraces everything *commanded* and *prohibited* by God. To believe yourself righteous in the sight of God simply because in an external way you have kept the Ten Commandments, would be

a gross error—still, an error often met with from the Pharisees' day up to our own. Men think that an external compliance with God's Law justifies them in God's, in men's, and in their own sight. But Christ condemns the evil thought and desire. He calls the evil lust adultery. He calls the man who hates his brother a murderer. So if you at any time in your life had an evil thought in your heart, you have broken the Law, the *whole* Law; for, "Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," James 2, 10.

More than this. You were born in sin. "Whatsoever is born of flesh is flesh." David says he was "shapen in iniquity," and Paul confesses that in him, that is, in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing, Rom. 7, 18.

"Oh, but no one can help being born in sin, so God would not condemn us on account of that," someone says. But what says the Bible? "We were *by nature* the children of wrath, even as others," Eph. 2, 3. And the question is not whether you can *help* being born in sin, but whether you *are* born in sin. God must condemn sin wherever He finds it, so that natural sin, too, must be wiped away, before we can hope to enter heaven; for, "Ye shall be holy even as your Father, which is in heaven, is holy."

Moreover, even if at the close of a day we are not *conscious* of having committed a wrong, this does not prove our innocence in God's sight. David exclaims, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse Thou me from secret faults." In other words, Who can see all his failings? Cleanse Thou me from the faults secret or unknown to me. Possibly you *failed* to do a good deed, or speak the right word, or do your duty so fully as you should have done. In short, the Law of God calls for a sinless birth and for a perfect and full and unreserved compliance with the divine Law *in its every detail*. If you do not meet these requirements, you come under the curse of the Law, and if dying under its curse, you will be lost eternally.

You will exclaim, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" And the instant answer is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved." And here our church preaches the *Gospel* in its full assurance and sweetness. There are no "ifs" and "buts" about this. No conditions to fulfill, such as praying and praying, until you feel some sort of peace and quiet; no deeds or works of any kind to do—simply believe and accept.

Accept what? Accept Christ as your Savior. He was conceived and born sinless, perfectly fulfilled the Law in all its requirements as to thoughts, words, and deeds; He could in the full sense of the word say that no one—not even the omniscient God—con-

vinceth Him of one sin, John 8, 46. And upon Him God hath laid the iniquity of us all. He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. And though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as wool; even though they be as the sands of the sea, they shall be drowned in the depths thereof. — Accept this truth, make it your own, rely on this Savior, and on Him alone, for salvation, and you are justified in the sight of God, you are converted.

Now you are in a position and condition to perform *good deeds*. Before this time you were a corrupt tree that could not possibly bring forth good fruit, for “whatsoever is not of faith is sin,” the Bible says. An unconverted man can give money to the church or to charity; he can be kind to his family and watch at the bedside of the sick; he can even be a regular attendant at services and offer long prayers: but all this is *sin*, since it does not proceed from faith. The unregenerate can do no truly good deeds whatever; the regenerate does good deeds all day long — aside from his actual failings, for these he will retain as long as he lives in this flesh. “If we say we have *no sin*, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” To claim *perfect holiness*, meaning thereby the absence of all failings and sin, shows a misconception of the divine Law and of our weak and failing natures. Paul says, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus,” Phil. 3, 12. — But a constant endeavor for betterment in conduct is to be made, as exemplified in St. Paul, for the very reason that we are not perfect and have not already attained.

The holy sacraments, *Baptism* and the *Holy Supper*, are also a part of the whole counsel of God. We practice baptism of infants by sprinkling, or pouring. The question is, if this is of any benefit to them, seeing that they are not conscious of the act. But how would this objection hold in the Old Testament with reference to circumcising infants on the eighth day?

True, babes are not conscious of the act of Baptism, but this does not prevent the almighty God from working forgiveness of sin by means of this Sacrament, it being a washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost. When infants are thus suffered to come to Jesus, as those children of old, what reason have we for saying that He will not bless them, that He will not hear our united prayers for the helpless suppliants, forgiving their sin and receiving them in grace? And “wherever there is forgiveness of sin, there is also life and salvation,” Luther says.

“But can children believe?” Christ expressly speaks of the “little ones which *believe* in me,” Matt. 18, 6. Again, the Lord

says when speaking of little children, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," Mark 10, 14, and how could the kingdom of heaven be *of such*, unless they had saving faith, since "without faith it is impossible to please God"? So denying faith to infants means consigning them to damnation—a thought too horrible to dwell upon.

Then there is the *Lord's Supper*. Of this the Apostle says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. 10, 16. Let us look at these words again. We have here the cup of blessing, the wine. Is that not the communion, is it not connected with the blood of Christ in the Sacrament? The same holds true with the bread and the body of Christ. This body and blood of Christ are given and shed "for the remission of sins," as shown by the words of institution. Hence Holy Communion is more than a simple memorial, for the body and blood of Christ are really and truly present.

However, we would fall short of our calling if our *principle* and *practice* did *not agree*, if our doctrine and our life would conflict. The Apostle did not shun to declare his position and follow up in practice what he believed and "declared," or taught. And let us see if *Lutheran practice* harmonizes with *Lutheran principle*.

II.

On entering this house this evening you likely had a few minutes of leisure to consider the thought: How does this congregation raise the money to build a house like this and to support her pastor? The answer is, By free-will offerings; not by fairs and entertainments, or any other money-making contrivances. We hold that the love of Christ should constrain us to give willingly and freely for the upbuilding of His kingdom without any prospects of temporal returns—not even of a dish of ice cream or an article of merchandise. Again, for Christians to ask outsiders to support their church brings reproach upon the name of Christ. Would you go out on the street and beg for your children when you are well able to support them yourself? Why, then, do it for the church? Are we to love Christ less than our children?

You see the furnishings of this church—the architecture, altar, font, crucifix, candles, the clerical robe of the minister, and you likely suppose this congregation to be semi-Catholic—not thoroughly reformed, you know. But let me say that the Lutheran church, also called the Church of the Reformation, is at a greater distance from the Roman Catholic church than any other denomi-

nation. However, as to outward forms, our church proves all things and holds fast that which is good.

And it cannot be denied that we human beings are influenced to a great extent by our surroundings. While it is true that we can worship God in spirit and in truth even in the dens of wild animals, or in the depths of the forest, it is also true that the very sensation of being in the house of God, set aside for His worship, with its churchly appointments and sacred associations, is a great help to devotion. The robe of the minister reminds you that he is speaking and officiating in an other than everyday capacity. Why not avail ourselves of these aids since we attach nothing superstitious to them? And if at any time we believe we can serve the Lord better without some or all of the externals I mentioned, they can easily be discarded; the local congregation always remains supreme in such matters and can arrange their services and house of worship as they please.

The congregation joins in singing a grand old church choral, and you will find it a feature of our church that the whole congregation unites in the singing—not a select few or a paid choir only.

The pastor reads a Scripture selection and a prayer at the altar. The reading of prayers has caused adverse comment. A child does not read his wants to his parents, you say. Very well, but if a child were spokesman for a number of others it might be wise to *read* the petition and not speak at random. The pastor and each Christian have matters to tell their Father that belong to the closet, but the pastor, when praying in public service, is to voice the thoughts that *move his congregation*, and so it is wise in the church to formulate set prayers for various occasions.

In line with this, we have Gospel and Epistle lessons for each Sunday in the church year, the pastor usually preaching on the one or the other lesson. In this way the whole counsel of God is declared following the cycle of the church year. No pet doctrine is continually harped upon at the expense of the rest. The objection that the whole Bible is not treated in sermons will not hold, as that is a practicable impossibility; centralizing thoughts, however, on certain selections often repeated emphasizes them and in a measure memorizes them. The *whole* Bible should be read and studied at home and in school.

As the pastor ascends the pulpit, the question may come to you why we do not practice an exchange of pulpits with preachers of other denominations. We do not deny that there are Christians also in other Christian churches. We thank God devoutly for this fact. However, if there are doctrinal differences weighty enough for us to organize separate churches and carry on independent church work, it is but simple consistency to have "Lutheran pulpits for

Lutheran ministers only.” We know the cry of “bigotry,” “narrowmindedness,” “self-conceit,” etc., is raised, but, candidly, is it not the pastor’s and congregation’s duty carefully to guard against erroneous doctrine? How, then, could we conscientiously invite a teacher of false doctrine to our pulpit? A free exchange of pulpits, as so often seen in our day, should, if justified, cause the various denominations practicing it to merge forthwith, for it is our solemn duty to identify ourselves with all that are our brethren in the faith.

As the pastor descends from the pulpit and steps to the altar you may happen to witness a baptism. Sponsors answer in place of the child. These sponsors, members of the church, promise to lend their aid and influence toward bringing up the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We do not baptize children and then let them take care of themselves spiritually. They are early instructed in the Christian doctrine at home, and thereupon in the parish, or parochial school. You have noticed a parochial school in connection with this congregation. This school is not established and maintained in opposition to the public schools; in fact, we recognize the public school to be a necessity and gladly pay our taxes toward its maintenance. But since *religion* is not taught in the public school, and should not be; since, however, we are to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, we Lutherans must establish and maintain church schools for that purpose. And in these schools—of which there are in our German Missouri Synod alone about 2000, with 100,000 pupils—religion is not merely one of the lessons given, but it imbues and permeates the whole life of the school. A *training* is given in religion, not merely an *instruction*.

The graduate of the parochial school attends the pastor’s catechetical instructions, preparatory to Confirmation. If you are in this church on Palm Sunday you may witness the impressive ceremony of a class being confirmed. They by a public examination prove themselves well grounded in the Christian religion, able to examine themselves” before partaking of Holy Communion.

Possibly you are present also at a funeral. If so, you may rest assured that funeral sermons are preached from this pulpit only for such as have not been, to the last, despisers of the Word and sacraments. Suicides are never accorded a Christian burial by our pastors, unless it can be clearly shown that they had been plucked as a brand from the burning. If you grant the man that commits self-murder as the last act in life, approaching his Maker with blood-stained hands, the burial of a child of God, you countenance his heinous act. Say what you will, such performances on the part of

Christian ministers lower God to an inconsistent being, and put shame and disgrace upon the Church.

And, after all, not popularity with men, nor a large church organization, even though it be called Lutheran, will save us, "for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," except the name of Christ. Let us spread His name abroad by aiding that church which teaches and practices "the whole counsel of God."

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run,
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

A. M.

Confessional Sermon on 1 Cor. 11, 24.

IN CHRIST JESUS DEARLY BELOVED COMMUNICANTS:—

Four times Holy Scripture records the institution of the Lord's Supper. And each time we are told *what* it is. In each record the Holy Spirit is careful to impress upon us that here, in this holy Sacrament, we receive the body and the blood of Christ. "This is my body," "this is my blood," says Christ. These words are so plain, so positive, and so unmistakable that faith cannot but answer, "Yea, it is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." Let who will reason, dispute, and doubt, we Christians know that Christ's words are not given to us to be disputed by reason, or to be doubted because mysterious, but that they are given to us to be accepted by that faith of which our Lord says: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." Therefore we all say to-day again as heretofore: The Sacrament of the Altar "*is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.*"

But we also ask, For what purpose is this Sacrament to be celebrated in the church? This question is also answered by our Lord when He says, "*This do in remembrance of me.*"—These words certainly are of great importance to you who wish to partake of this blessed Sacrament. To you Christ says again this morning: "*This do in remembrance of me.*" Permit me, then, to answer for you the question:

WHEN DOES A COMMUNICANT RIGHTLY REMEMBER CHRIST?

I answer: When in true faith he calls to mind

- I. *The cause of Christ's suffering and death.*
- II. *The fruit of Christ's suffering and death.*

I.

It was in the night in which He was betrayed that our dear Lord instituted this Holy Supper. In that night He said: "This do in remembrance of me." We are to remember Him especially as our suffering and dying Savior. St. Paul also expressly tells us: "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the *Lord's death* till He come." In this holy Sacrament we call to mind, show, and proclaim the Lord's *death*. It is indeed a memorial of Christ's suffering and death. But we must not suppose that it is sufficient if we are by this celebration of the Lord's Supper reminded of the fact that Christ died. O no! Rightly to remember Christ's death requires, first, that we call to mind the cause of Christ's great suffering and cruel death. Why did He die? Why did He suffer that unspeakable torture of crucifixion? He had done nothing amiss. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. His very enemies could find no fault in Him, none of them could convince Him of sin. He, Jesus, the Son of man, was also the Son of God. Conceived by the Holy Ghost He had been born of a virgin, and in all His life He committed no sin. God, His Father, repeatedly declared that in Him He was well pleased. God found no flaw or blemish upon Him. Why, then, did He suffer so much and die such a cruel, disgraceful death? The Bible tells us: "He was wounded for our transgression, He was bruised for our iniquities." We and our sins were the cause of His agony. He had taken our guilt, sin and its punishment, upon Himself, and had gone forth to expiate this fearful guilt. "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." Remember that your sins nailed Jesus to the cross. Say it, then, with repentance and faith:

Ah! I also and my sin
Wrought Thy deep affliction;
This the real cause hath been
Of Thy crucifixion.

Do you not see, then, how great and terrible are your sins, that the innocent, holy Son of God had to cry out, suffer, and die because of them? What, and we should look carelessly upon that which brought upon our Lord such torture, agony, distress, pain, and death? Some time ago a large building burned in one of our largest cities; in a few moments over 500 persons had perished miserably. What if you had been the cause of that disaster and would have to tell yourself, I was to blame for their terrible death! — And yet, that were not as bad as to be the cause of Christ's suffering and death! And such sins you have committed in the last

months and weeks. Oh, surely we have cause to fall upon our knees and cry out: "God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

Yes, that is the right remembrance of Christ in this Holy Supper that we call to mind that our sins were the cause of His suffering, and thus "learn to look with terror at our sins and to regard them as great indeed." May God grant you such right remembrance of your Savior's death, and fill your hearts with contrition and sorrow for those sins that pressed the crown of thorns upon the holy head of God's only Child.

II.

But we must not stop here. Christ's death was not a calamity or disaster which we caused, but from the contemplation and remembrance of which we could bring away nothing but sorrow and terror. No, 'tis true, our sins are the cause of Christ's death, but it is also true that the death of Christ gained for us forgiveness of sin. Christ's death and suffering produced and won for us rich and enduring blessings. He actually accomplished what He had intended, "He was wounded for our transgression," and "*by His stripes we are healed.*" He paid our debt to the Father. The sacrifice which He made upon the cross was accepted by God, and thereby we were delivered from the guilt and punishment of our sin. With confident joy we may exclaim: "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin!" 'Tis true, our Lord fought a great battle that day on Calvary. He made a great sacrifice, every drop of blood that He shed and every pain that tortured Him was of greater value than heaven and earth. He paid a great price. But He did not suffer in vain; His agony bore rich fruit; by that great price we were bought. He gained for us, for each of us, for the worst of us, forgiveness of all our sins, deliverance from death and the power of the devil. Our sins are now canceled, God forgives them, every one, death cannot harm us, but must carry us into Abraham's bosom, and the devil dare not touch or claim us. Oh, thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift! And these treasures which Jesus bought for you at so great a price, these He offers to you in this holy Sacrament to-day. He gives you His body, and with it He says to you: "It is given for you," and He gives you His blood, and in giving it He says: "It was shed for you." Oh, then, as you take it, do it in joyful and believing remembrance that through Christ's death you are saved, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses you from all sin. His Word offers you the treasure, and your faith takes it. His word, "This is my body, my blood, given and shed for you," bestows upon you pardon, life, and salvation, and you who believe and trust these words, you have

what they say and express, namely, forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation.

Oh, blessed are you believing communicants! You receive here the greatest treasure which the almighty and rich God has ever given to man. Such a communion in which we thus, in true faith, call to mind the fruit of Christ's suffering and death is done in remembrance of Him.

Tell me, shall we not leave here and go on our way rejoicing? Accepted of God and forgiven, who shall condemn us?

Oh, let us then also live a life of gratitude to our Savior! Let us flee from temptation. Clean now, let us avoid pollution. In God's favor, let us not do that which He hates and forbids. Let us also remember that "He died for all, that they which live should henceforth not live unto themselves, *but unto Him who died for them and rose again.*"

Let us pray:

Grant that I Thy Passion view
With repentant grieving,
Nor Thee crucify anew
By unholy living.
How could I refuse to shun
Every sinful pleasure
Since for me God's only Son
Suffered without measure?

Amen.

M. S. S.

Wedding Discourse.

Ps. 119, 94.

MY DEAR CHRISTIANS:—

Congratulations will be offered to you this day by many of your friends. Your *best* friends are those of the "household of faith," your brethren and sisters in Christ, your fellow Christians. And their congratulations are the very best, far superior to all that are extended to you to-day by others. Why? Because the congratulation of a Christian is, at the same time, a *prayer* offered on your behalf to the Father of lights, from whose hands is "every good gift and every perfect gift," James 1, 17.

Does the same Christian faith and piety dwell in your hearts that is found by God in the hearts of the Christians congratulating you? Only as Christians can and will you *appreciate* the excellence and great value of such Christian congratulations and fervent wishes. Ah, if you were not a Christian bridal couple, the best wishes of your Christian friends would find their fulfillment in part only,

namely, only as far as they refer to the daily bread which God indeed "gives to the wicked also without their prayer."

Since so much, then, depends upon your being a Christian bridal couple to-day and during all the coming years of your married life, let me *strengthen your Christianity* by picturing to you

THE CHRISTIAN BRIDAL COUPLE.

Both bride and bridegroom

- I. *Believe in Christ,*
- II. *Love, and*
- III. *Obey Him.*

I.

"*I am Thine, save me!*" These words imply an implicit *faith*. "I am thine," are sweet words of assurance by which, through the consent of your parents, you have become rightfully betrothed. "I am thine," are words which each of you uttered only after gaining full confidence, that you would be safe in intrusting yourself to the other for your whole lifetime. And now, if either of you should be overtaken by some misfortune, to whom among men would you first address your appeal, "Save me"? To your spouse, most assuredly.

There is One whom both of you address in the words of the Psalmist, "*I am Thine, save me!*" *It is Christ, your Savior*. Having learned from the Law that you were lost and condemned, you hailed with delight the message of the Gospel: "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. 10, 4. "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3, 16. You have entrusted yourself to the Savior, being fully convinced that He, and He alone, could and actually did atone for your sins, that He is your Advocate with the Father every day and hour, and that He will preserve you unto life everlasting.

The fact that *both* of you have such saving faith *adds happiness to your married life*, for you are assured that not even death can really separate you. It would not be thus if one of you refused to accept the Savior. To be sure, people do not go to heaven together because they are married to each other on earth, or belong to the same family. Husbands or wives are saved only through faith in the Savior, *personal* faith. Hence, let a husband and wife be ever so happily mated, if they are not *one in faith*, then the dreadful thought that after death they will be parted forever greatly interferes with the conjugal happiness of the believing part in such matrimony.

Your happy wedlock cannot be marred by such fears.

II.

"I am Thine, save me!"—these words are secondly expressive of greatest *love* for the Savior.

Where the Son of God wishes to describe His love for the Church He cannot find a more suitable illustration than the fervent affection of a bridegroom for his bride. You cannot imagine a more intense love in the whole world than that felt by yourselves when you say to each other, "I am thine." And each of you knows the other to be possessed of the same overpowering affection which would not stop short of sacrificing his or her own life to save that of the other.

Still, there is One whom both of you must love *more fervently* than you love each other, even Christ, your Bridegroom, Him who *gave His life for you* to save you from sin, death, and the power of the devil. Ah, you certainly do love Him, you fervently love Him. This is proved by the fact, that you, like other Christians, are sorry for not loving Him more, and as your love is growing all the time you feel how much more you would like to love Him. That is supreme affection for your Savior, to be sure, a work of the Holy Spirit within you. (Hymn 365, 11.)

Since you have taken Christ into your wedlock, to love Him forever, your own affection for each other can only become more intense, and your conjugal bliss will be increased in proportion.

III.

"I am Thine, save me; *for I have sought Thy precepts.*"

Can you imagine the latter words to be spoken *between a Christian husband and wife*? Yes, indeed. Which part would address them to the other? The loving Christian wife to her dear husband. For she is the "modern woman," precious in the eyes of the Lord, who remembers the beautiful words of Paul, Eph. 5, 23: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything." And the husband, not to be outdone by the loving obedience of his wife towards him, is ever mindful of the precepts: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it," Eph. 5, 25. "Husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge," 1 Pet. 3, 7. "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them," Col. 3, 19. Where both husband and wife studiously observe this wise ordinance of their God, their house will never be divided against itself and domestic peace never be disturbed.

The same married couple, so anxious about keeping *one* precept of the Lord will be equally mindful of *all* precepts contained in the

dear Bible. "I have sought Thy precepts." They value all the precepts of the Word of God pertaining to a holy life. The faith in Jesus Christ, their Lord, and in the gracious forgiveness of sins for His sake gives them the necessary strength to perform the precepts of God, as you may learn from the preceding verse (93): "I will never forget Thy precepts, for with them *Thou hast quickened me.*" And when we notice our many shortcomings in the sphere of our domestic life, as well as in other directions, we seek these *Gospel* precepts for absolution, consolation, salvation.

You also, dear bridal couple, will seek the precepts of the Lord, those of the Law to guide your conduct by them; those of the Gospel to be saved by them. The Bible which contains these precepts of your dear Lord will occupy a prominent place in your new home, and the house of God where those precepts are expounded will be your delightful abode. Your hearts say: Hymn 226, 6. Amen.

R. D. B.

Outlines for Sermons on the Gospel-Lessons.

Quinquagesima Sunday.

LUKE 18, 31—43.

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem." These words of the Savior explain why just this Gospel lesson was set apart for this Sunday, the last Sunday before Lent. We are now to be ushered into the season when we shall, in spirit, go up with Christ on His last fateful way to Jerusalem. The contemplation of His Passion is to bring before us the consummation of God's plan for our redemption, a plan that required the fullest expiation for the sin of the world in order that the sinner might be saved.—Many also within the churches will live through this season without deriving any marked spiritual benefit therefrom; and would we profit by this going with Christ to Jerusalem we must be prepared to see and understand the workings of God's wonderful plan of salvation.—Let me propound the question:

ARE YOU PREPARED TO GO WITH CHRIST TO JERUSALEM?

I. *You are not if you go in the spirit of the disciples.*

a. Their knowledge of Jesus was defective. *a.* They did not know that He should establish His kingdom through suffering; *β.* that as High Priest He must die for their sins.

b. The cause of this was: *a.* They had not yet realized their forlorn state and spiritual misery; *β.* they were filled with carnal prejudices. They would keep away the blind man, as they had once sought to keep away the children from Jesus. They did not see that He was to be the Savior of the wretched and forlorn. *γ.* They had not yet learned to go to the Word and to get their

knowledge of the Son of man from the Word, v. 31 b.—Such preconceived notions and natural prejudices you must rid yourselves of.

II. *You are prepared to go with Christ to Jerusalem if you go in the spirit of the blind man.*

a. He is not misled and offended at the lowliness of Him who was often called in derision “Jesus of Nazareth.” Though He goes His way as an ordinary mortal, this blind man sees in Him the “Son of David,” the King who, as the Promised One, should help the poor and forsaken. He calls Him Jesus, *i. e.*, Savior, and Lord.

b. The cause of this. *α.* He realized his wretched state in body and spirit; he saw that he needed help. *β.* His knowledge of the Helper was drawn from the Word, for he uses Scripture titles in addressing Jesus.

c. You must see that all things that were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man are brought to pass; must view your Savior in the Word. From that Word you must learn every day anew that you need a Savior; from that Word you must learn to know who is that Savior. The wisdom of our age would deny the fact of sin and the necessity of forgiveness through a suffering Savior. It preaches redemption through man’s own working and places salvation in the material uplifting and prosperity of the race. Jesus of Nazareth is, in the philosophy of the day, an example of noble virtue, and the world is the better for His having lived and died on account of the example that He set.—May we be blind to all this false light and see our Savior from sin in the Word, so that of us it may be said, “Thy faith hath saved thee.” G. A. R.

Sermon Outlines for the Lenten Season.

A.

GAL. 1, 4.

The great subject of Lent is the Lord’s Passion, the suffering and death of our Savior. (See *Theol. Quart.*, vol. III, no. 1, p. 105.) LUTHER: “In this season of the year it is customary for the Church, both in her hymns and sermons, to dwell especially upon the Passion of Christ.” (*House-Postil*, vol. II, p. 42.) “To preach the Passion of Christ, our Lord, properly it is not sufficient to read the narrative to the people, but we must add admonition and instruction, that they may realize and remember *why* Christ suffered thus, and in what way they are benefited by His Passion.” (*Ib.*, vol. II, p. 47.)

THE HIGH SANCTION OF CHRIST’S PASSION.

It was:—

I. *In accordance with divine appointment.*

a. In the counsels of eternity it was agreed that Christ should undertake the work of our redemption and salvation. Our text. Is. 53, 10. Acts 2, 23; 4, 28.

b. There was no constraint; it was all voluntary. Ps. 40, 8. Hebr. 10, 7. John 4, 34; 5, 30; 6, 38.

II. *For the fulfillment of the divine predictions.*

a. God the Father promised a Savior who should suffer for us. In plain words; in clear types; at various periods.

b. God the Father felt a pleasure in the fulfillment of the predictions of His Word. Ungodly people should remember this, and be afraid: God will keep His word. Christians should remember this, and take comfort, 2 Tim. 2, 13.

B.

Ps. 49, 7. 8.

Brief review of first discourse.

THE NECESSITY OF CHRIST'S PASSION.

It was:—

I. *For the satisfaction of divine justice.*

a. We all sinned, violated the divine Law.

b. No one can by any means redeem his brother, much less himself. "Redemption too precious."

c. Christ Jesus had to come and to suffer, that He might fulfill the Law and satisfy divine justice.

II. *For the reconciliation with God.*

a. Man offended his God, in words and deeds.

b. Man could not make reconciliation for sins, "nor give to God a ransom."

c. Christ Jesus came, suffered, and died to reconcile God with man and man with God, 1 John 2, 1. 2. Rom. 5, 11. (Atonement = reconciliation.)

C.

Ps. 22, 1—18.

A review of lesson two as introduction.

THE NATURE OF CHRIST'S PASSION.

Christ suffered:—

I. *In His soul.*

a. Prediction: v. 1.

b. Fulfillment: Matt. 26, 38; 27, 46. All this Christ suffered on account of our sins. (Mental sufferings.)

II. *In His body.*

a. Prediction: our text.

b. Fulfillment. Christ's sufferings in the high priest's palace, Matt. 26, 57; in Pilate's hall, Matt. 27; on Calvary, Luke 23.

J. C. A.

(To be continued.)